



THE CHURCH TRAIL: THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST BOWFACE, BONCHURCH



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The origins of the church

Bonchurch appears in the amazingly detailed Norman investigation into how much tax everyone should pay: the Domesday Book. In this it is called **Bonecerce**: *bone* a shortened version of *Boniface* and *cerce* the Anglo-Saxon for church. Beginning in the 1830s the population of Bonchurch began to increase significantly and this meant the Norman church near the shore was not large enough for everyone who wanted to attend. By 1843 there were 500 people living in the village. The Rector of Bonchurch was the Venerable Justly Hill, who was more interested in his other parish in Shanklin. It was said by one of the locals that he was only seen in Bonchurch for the service on Sundays and, to complete the service quickly, no singing was allowed. The newer residents, one of whom was Queen Victoria's lady-in-waiting, were all wealthy, influential and not at all happy with this. They felt a larger church was needed.

The shortage of land by the old church made enlarging it impossible and knocking the Norman church down and beginning again was not welcomed by the Bishop of Portsmouth. Hill was unhappy about this because a new church would deserve its own priest thereby depriving him of half of his income.

Notable

The church was built by the same architect as the parish church of St Andrew in Bonchurch. Its basic design is a simple rectangular church with a spire. It is able to see the sea from the church tower. The church was built in 1847 and was felt this did not fit in with the new church.

Outside

There are a great many gravestones and tombstones. They come in an amazing variety of styles and it is quite rare to find a gravestone that is found on the church grounds.

Inside

The aim had been to build a simple church to exhibit plain and simple beauty. The plain glass windows were set out on hills, worshippers would see the hills on the pew and the hills on the hills.

The Victorians

The new church was built in 1847 and was felt this did not fit in with the new church. It was with a view to building a new church and therefore unsuitable for the sort of house the wealthier residents like.

There was no lack of money, but the church was not large enough for everyone who wanted to attend. By 1843 there were 500 people living in the village. The Rector of Bonchurch was the Venerable Justly Hill, who was more interested in his other parish in Shanklin. It was said by one of the locals that he was only seen in Bonchurch for the service on Sundays and, to complete the service quickly, no singing was allowed. The newer residents, one of whom was Queen Victoria's lady-in-waiting, were all wealthy, influential and not at all happy with this. They felt a larger church was needed.

The surveying was done by the architect who built the church. The final cost of building was £2850, nearly twice the original estimate, but it could hold three hundred people who read the quality of the work.

It was consecrated on 11th December 1848.

A more detailed history of the church is available to buy in the church.

BONCHURCH

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What to look out for at the Parish Church of St Boniface

100010

Outside

Inside



Romanesque Door



Outside Light



Altar



Pulpit



Romanesque Window



Family Mausoleum



Font



Lectern

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Swinburn family grave



Ornamental Grave



Bishop's Chair



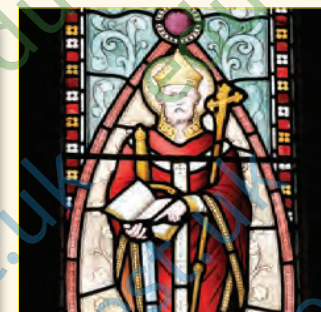
Choir Stalls



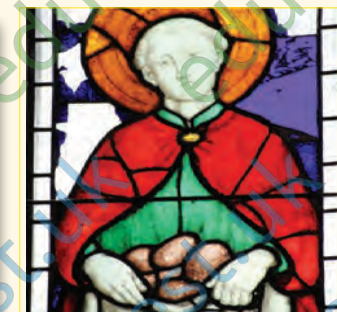
A sea-themed grave



A cross without arms



St Boniface stained glass window



St Stephen with potatoes



A family obelisk



Celtic Cross



Hammer Beam Roof



The East Window

